



AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE OFFICES: 50 EAST HURON STREET, CHICAGO 11

LIBRARY SERVICE TO LABOR NEWSLETTER *

Dorothy Bendix, Chairman
Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups
5 Washington Street, Newark 1, N. J.

Committee Members:

For the A.L.A. - William W. Bryan, Scranton P. L.
Sarah E. Large, Denver P. L.

Ida Goshkin, Akron P. L.
Anthony Luchek, Head, Labor
Education Service, Pennsylvania
State College.

For the AFL - John D. Connors, Director, Workers Education Bureau.
For the CIO - George T. Guernsey, Associate Director of Education.

Vol. 3

January-February 1951

No. 3

REPORT ON THE CIO MARYLAND-DELAWARE-VIRGINIA SUMMER SCHOOL

by Suzanne V. Pearce, Reference Librarian,
Division of Library Extension, Maryland State Department of Education

The CIO Maryland-Delaware-Virginia School was scheduled from August 20-26 at Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Maryland. Mr. George T. Guernsey, CIO Associate Director of Education and a member of the ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups, had asked Miss Dorothy Bendix, Chairman of the Joint Committee, to obtain library service and librarians for each of these summer schools. Miss Bendix wrote to Miss Helen Clark, Director of the Division of Library Extension, State Department of Education, asking her to suggest a librarian from the state of Maryland. Since it was felt that most of the members from Maryland attending the school would be from the city of Baltimore, the opportunity to supply the librarian was given first to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. Although the Pratt Library was interested in the project, it could not see its way clear to participate in the school for 1950. Following this decision Miss Clark asked me to act as librarian at the school for August 22 and 23.

A selection of materials was made on the following subjects: thirty-five books on labor, its background, history and development, as well as several new books on the role of labor in modern politics and government. In addition to material directly relating to labor, books and pamphlets were supplied in other fields in which the library could be of service to the workers and their families. These included books on subjects of special interest to the workers, such as housing, social security and farming, plus popular fiction, books for children and young people, picture books for pre-school children, popular non-fiction on such subjects as cooking, pets, baby care and travel.

Free materials, such as book lists on subjects of interest and leaflets explaining the services of the Division of Library Extension and the Pratt Library

* The material published in the NEWSLETTER and the opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the policy or views of the ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups.

were taken to the work-shop and distributed among the members, and placed in the main meeting room and in the Library of the Center.

The collection of books and pamphlets was set up in Old Windsor Hall which was called the Union Building for the one week period. With the display there was a large standing poster which showed by means of photographs and leaflets the work which the county library does in serving all the people; also a large scrapbook of Maryland libraries and the work of librarians in many fields throughout the state.

I was asked to speak at the evening session on August 22. I explained library service in Maryland and suggested to those members outside the state of Maryland that they would find approximately the same library service in their home states. I enumerated library services which would be of use to labor, in particular the business and economic fields, the borrowing of phonograph records and the great use made of films borrowed from the library, as well as various services rendered by libraries to the wives and children of the workers.

The members of the school used the books very little during the day because they were busy with their classwork. However, the display created interest in what they could find and use in their local libraries. Books and pamphlets were circulated at night and read in their rooms. The books which drew the most interest were:

Austin, Aleine	Labor Story
Fountain, Clayton	Union Guy
Howe, Irving &	
Widick, B. J.	The UAW and Walter Reuther
Lattimore, Owen	Ordeal by Slander
McCune, George	Korea Today
Madison, Charles	American Labor Leaders

The display was left for the remainder of the week and was picked up on Friday night, August 25, when Miss Clark and I returned for the closing evening session of entertainment.

For the benefit of future library service to CIO summer schools, the following suggestions are made:

1. Posters should advertise what the library can do for labor, not what the library can do for the general public, nor what the library has accomplished in the development of library service.
2. A librarian should be available at all times at the school. A telephone worker from Virginia stated that it was a great help to have someone there to suggest reading material and to answer questions and to give information. More was accomplished by books plus librarian, than by books alone.
3. The librarian should attend the classes, in order to become more familiar with labor problems, viewpoints of labor on national and international affairs, and to become familiar with the labor organization's own educational program. The librarian should take part in class discussion, if this is agreeable with the teacher and is not met with antagonism on the

part of the class members. Librarians need to know what labor group interests are.

4. There should be more cooperative planning between the National office of the CIO and the library before the school begins.
5. If possible the librarian's name should be included in Who's Who on the Staff in the CIO Educational Manual, in order to create a feeling of closer integration with the school.
6. For the Maryland school I would stress the importance of having a librarian represent the Pratt Library, since most of the contacts at present are with Baltimore labor groups. A librarian from the state could visit the school for one or two days, in order to interpret library service to labor groups outside the city of Baltimore.

The cooperation of labor and libraries should create mutual understanding, and should benefit both through the services of the library to labor and the enrichment of library services created by the demands of labor.

* * * *

REPORT ON THE C.I.O. ROCKY MOUNTAIN SUMMER SCHOOL

by Sarah E. Large, Head, Business Division, Denver Public Library

The states of Colorado, Montana, Wyoming and Utah were represented at the Rocky Mountain Summer School of the C.I.O. held in Estes Park, Colorado, June 18-24, 1950.

The Denver Public Library was asked to furnish a collection of books on labor and related problems for the meetings. It was felt that we were too short staffed to release anyone for a whole week, but we agreed to have a display for the first two days of the session.

Mountains, some of them snow-covered, form a circle around the Y.M.C.A. camp grounds where the school was held. The group was not too large and there was plenty of opportunity for getting well acquainted around the fireplace in the lodge, in the dining room where people shifted about at different meals in order to talk to one another, or in the snack shop where most adjourned for the evening coffee and to continue in smaller groups the discussions which had been started earlier.

The classes were held in a small cabin and the library display of pamphlets and books, government documents on labor problems, was in the rear of the meeting room. A list of recommended books was sent to us and we provided those in addition to more recent titles on labor and related topics, e.g. on how to make speeches and hold meetings.

Mr. George Guernsey, director of the C.I.O. Summer-School program, emphasized the use of the library in every session and the delegates examined the books and asked about materials. Much of the discussion involved knowing how congress votes and the means of finding the voting records of local congressmen. There was emphasis on legislative issues such as the Taft-Hartley Act, old age and disability

insurance, national health insurance, unemployment, housing, rent control, federal funds for schools, fair employment practices on labor's stake in economic foreign policy, farmers and farm legislation, and on the natural resources of the Rocky Mountain West. We had anticipated discussion of most of the topics, but others were not included in our book collection. If we had had in advance the very excellent manual which was furnished to each person attending, it would have helped us greatly in gathering materials which would be most needed.

As a student participant in the classes, I learned much about the region in which I live, and about the labor problems in certain industries as they were shown in the experiences of individuals in the group. There were present four or five German women, trade union members, who were in this country to observe labor conditions. One of the most interesting evenings was the one in which they discussed their own jobs, the conditions of workers in their country and the differences they had noted in this country.

Some very good techniques were shown for arousing general group participation in discussion and pepping up meetings, since it was a training school for workers who would be going back to hold union meetings. The use of films, songs and the various means for arousing interest in attending meetings was explained, all of which any librarian should know for her own work. I considered it a profitable two days.

* * * *

TWUA BOOK AND PAMPHLET CLUB

by Harry Gersh and Lawrence Rogin

Education and Publicity Department, Textile Workers Union of America, CIO

About 165 staff members of the Textile Workers Union of America, CIO, invest \$1.50 a month in book and pamphlet reading selected for them by the TWUA Book and Pamphlet Club. The Club is one activity of the TWUA Education Department. Selections are made by an Education Department staff man.

The TWUA Book Club is directed primarily toward the union staff in the field. This includes the organizers and others who work full time for the union in its many tasks such as settling grievances, negotiating contracts, etc. Most of this group originally worked in the shop and developed into leadership through union activity. Thus it represents a great variety of educational background from those who have had little education to an occasional college graduate.

Three criteria control the selection of books and booklets for the TWUA staff. But the three bases of selection do not have equal weight. They are: what's around - at the price we can pay; will the staff members want this particular book (or should they want it); will they read it.

Since the \$1.50 a month includes a subscription to "Labor and Nation", the club is left with a bit more than \$1 a month for other material, handling and mailing. This narrows book selections to what is in the remainder market. And the remainder market fluctuates widely.

As the appended selection list shows, the reading tastes of the TWUA staff - or at least of the TWUA selector - are catholic. During the last 12 months the Book Club distributed 15 hard-bound books. They included 4 books of general interest; 3 novels; 2 on politics; 2 histories; 2 biographies; 1 word builder; 1 book of cartoons.

In choosing books the selector must first like the book. Then he must decide whether there is any justification for its distribution by TWUA. The fact that

a book is a good book is not justification enough. The TWUA Education Department has certain definite aims, but they do not include cultivation of the literary tastes of the staff. However, the connection between the book and the union does not have to be direct. Genre novels, books on politics, background books, all fit in.

Most of the Book Club subscribers are not book readers in the sense that they regularly buy, borrow and read books. The TWUA Book Club depends in part on the general book club psychology - the book club member reads more books than the non-member of the same cultural group because the books are chosen for him, because they are delivered to him, and because there is a personal-prestige value implicit in belonging and reading.

One other factor adds to the need for the club and the readership of its books. Many of the TWUA Book Club members are field people. They spend much of their time away from home, living in hotels. With books coming regularly - books with the imprimatur of the TWUA Education Department - the field man becomes a book reader in the empty end of the evening. With TWUA books and pamphlets on the dresser he is more likely to pick one up and less likely to doze off over the local paper or pulp magazine.

When deciding whether a book will be read, the selector is guided as much by intuition as by definite knowledge. No serious studies have been made that might be of help. One fact is known by TWUA - the offices of the subscribers to the TWUA Book Club look much warmer and more impressive than the usual union office decorated with a few old magazines and government publications.

Some letters from subscribers do come to the Book Club. But they are very mixed, even on the same book. Style will occasion more comment than subject matter or point of view. Probably this is so because the selector and the book recipient are much closer on questions of point of view than they are on literary style.

Included in the monthly book package are three to six pamphlets. There is a feeling that these are more widely read than are the books. But, again, there is no scientific basis for this feeling. Recently pamphlets distributed include: "Our Foreign Policy", (U. S. Department of State); "CIO Economic Outlook"; "Religion Speaks to Labor" (CIO Southern Organizing Committee); "Greenville's Big Idea", (Southern Regional Council); "This Land is Ours", (Public Affairs Pamphlet); "Progress on Point Four", (U. S. Department of State); "What About Communism", (Public Affairs Pamphlet).

During 1950 the TWUA Book and Pamphlet Club distributed the following books:

January	- Years of Wrath - Low - cartoons
February	- The Labor Story - Austin - history
March	- You're the Boss - Flynn - politics
April	- Union Guy - Fountain - biography of a labor man
May	- What the People Want - Arnall - general Steeper Cliff - Davidson - novel
June	- Roosevelt I Knew - Perkins - personal history
July	- Young Lions - Shaw - novel

August - Trial By Prejudice - Hays - general
September - Mid-Term Battle - Bean - politics
What's the Good Word - Nurnberg - word builder
October - 1984 - Orwell - political novel
Yankee from Olympus - Bowan - biography
November - The Plotters - Carlson - general
December - Golden Threads - Josephson - textile history

* * * *

NEWS OF GENERAL INTEREST

The UNESCO Public Libraries Development has recently been added to the LIBRARY SERVICE TO LABOR NEWSLETTER mailing list. A complete back file was also sent at their request.

- - -

The WORKERS EDUCATION BUREAU, AFL moved to Washington on December 1, 1950. Their new address is: Suite 801, 724 - 9th Street, N. W., Washington 1, D. C.

- - -

"The 24 minute sound film 'Union at Work' produced by the Textile Workers Union of America, CIO, has already been purchased by six public libraries for their film collections. These were: Akron & Cleveland, Ohio; Gary, Indiana; Kansas City, Mo.; Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon. The union feels that the film is suitable for showing to the public as well as union groups and some of the libraries have already used it in this fashion. The Film Division of the union will be glad to send out 'Union at Work' free for preview purposes. The purchase price is \$60 net.

Film Division
Textile Workers Union of
America, CIO
99 University Place
New York 3, N.Y.

- - -

"A new idea of both aiding in getting the truth about American labor's history across to the public as well as doing a good job of public relations has been carried out by Ford Local 952, UAW, in Iron Mountain. The idea has also been copied successfully by the Gogebic CIO County Council in Ironwood.

"It simply consists of purchasing enough copies of 'The Labor Story' by Aleine Austin, to present to the various high schools and public libraries in the county. The legend on the fly leaf states by whom the book was presented.

"More CIO councils and locals should copy this plan. The books, which normally sell for \$2.50, can be obtained from this department for \$1.50 each."

From: MICHIGAN CIO NEWS,
September 21, 1950

* * * *

YOUR ATTENTION IS CALLED TO:

A very interesting article 'Workers Educators Examine and Approve Informal Education Techniques,' by A. A. Liveright, published in ADULT EDUCATION BULLETIN, June 1950, pp. 135-140.

This is a report on a West Coast Conference on Workers Education, held at Santa Monica, California, which "had as its prime objective the stimulation of local unions to undertake more education programs of an increasingly effective and democratic nature."

* * * *

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Miss Bendix:

I would like to raise strenuous objections to the manner in which the News Notes carried a report on the library of the Jefferson School. Any librarian not familiar with the Jefferson School would be completely misled by this report into believing that the Jefferson School is closely related to the labor movement of New York City. The facts are, of course, that probably 95% of the trade unionists of New York regard the Jefferson School as an educational arm of the Communist Party and that those unions which follow the Communist line do make use of both the Jefferson School and its library.

If there were good reasons for printing the report, the same reasons would justify a preliminary statement which would indicate the attitude of the New York unions to the School.

January 2, 1951

Lawrence Rogin, Director
Education & Publicity Dept.
Textile Workers Union of America, CIO

Dear Miss Bendix:

In the last issue of "Library Service to Labor Newsletter"...I was rather shocked by the appearance of an article on the library of the Jefferson School of Social Science, which is not a legitimate "independent" school or library and certainly not a labor institution, despite the clever attempt of the Jefferson School librarian, who wrote the article, to hide the true character of this institution by the use of such appellations as "working class", "Progressive", "independent" and the like. This school is one established to propagate communist ideas and indoctrinate students for the benefit of the communist movement.

This is not a mere personal opinion of mine; the Jefferson School, like the California Labor School, the Lincoln School, and many others across the country, are part of the communist network and have been on the Attorney-General's list of subversive organizations for a long, long time.

It seems to me that people who attempt to service labor groups cannot afford to be so innocent as to ignore the difference between bonafide labor and library institutions and the synthetic subversive outfits of the left-wing elements. Your organization and your "Newsletter" should not act as a vehicle to carry respectability to the communist movement, or any of its transmission belts.

Repetition of this kind of thing can only withdraw support and cooperation from the legitimate labor movement of this country, who will have no truck with communists or with any other kind of subversive totalitarian outfits.

Nov. 14, 1950

Benjamin Haskel, Director
Research and Education Dept.
United Textile Workers of America, AFL

* * * *

REPORT ON MIDWINTER MEETING

As was announced in the Nov.-Dec. issue of the NEWSLETTER the Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups sponsored an "informal discussion of problems arising in library service to labor groups" at the A.L.A. Midwinter Meeting in Chicago. The meeting took place on Thursday, Feb. 1, at 8:30 p.m. Dorothy Bendix presided. Mr. Hy Fish, assistant director, Labor Education Division, Roosevelt College, Chicago, acted as resource person.

In a short introduction Mr. Fish described the work of the Labor Education Division and pointed out how it was similar in many ways to the service libraries were trying to provide for labor groups. They, too, are selling a service to the labor movement; they, too, are doing promotional work through mailings, announcements, personal contacts, exhibits at meetings.

Roosevelt College is five years old. Its program is pledged to complete academic freedom and democracy and a policy which is non-discriminatory. It is the only institution which has given labor education equal status with other departments such as liberal arts, science and music. Most colleges and universities have helped management in their industrial relations programs. But Roosevelt College's labor education program is definitely a labor oriented program.

Getting such a labor program started is not easy because the labor movement has always been suspicious of any outside institution, and it is a slow process to break this suspicion down. The Labor Education Division started out with a few labor classes, but it has finally reached the point where labor is knocking at its doors asking for service. The college works in two ways: they carry on courses which are college centered, but most of their work is carried out to union halls and is tailor-made for a particular union. The most successful programs are those for which unions themselves have recruited members.

The selection of instructors is as important as the choice of a subject. The instructor must, above all, be sympathetic with the aims of the labor movement. (This does not mean being uncritical, however). Competency in the subject taught is important, but that alone is not the answer. The most popular subjects are tool courses, such as parliamentary procedure, collective bargaining, time study, etc.

The problem of getting people to read for these classes is the hardest to solve. The Labor Education Division has tried to do this in a number of ways. They have taken books to the classes, assigned pages to be read in pamphlets, distributed mimeographed one-page sheets; they have urged the students to use the school library and have given them cards for the library. But none of this has been very successful.

There is a great need for books written in the terms which workers themselves use. Publishers have been contacted for a labor series of books on a variety of subjects, and Roosevelt College itself has published one such text on job evaluation and is working on another, a union manual on time study.

Mr. Fish presented as one successful library program the results of one education director's efforts in a small library which the International Ladies' Garment Workers had established. Because this education director talked to each person who came into the library and found out what their interests were, recommended books which he thought they would enjoy, always had a discussion with them when they returned the books, he succeeded in building up quite a circulation which fell down again when he left.

In the discussion the problem of deposit collections in plants or union headquarters was mentioned first. Both the Minneapolis and Indianapolis Public Library reported on their deposit collections which are of a rather general nature. Boston's and New York City's work in this field was described briefly.

A staff member of the Buffalo Public Library felt it was advisable for a librarian working with labor to be a union member because it is necessary to have some entrée to union meetings. The New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University asked the Buffalo Public Library for use of their meeting rooms for labor classes, and for a collection of collateral reading to be set aside.

The Cleveland Public Library's "Memo to Labor" was mentioned. The regional directors of the CIO and AFL were called in before its printing. Two issues have come out. Recently, one union asked for 1,000 copies of the "Memo to Labor" for distribution to its members. Some years ago the experiment of sending a letter to union members with a library application was tried. These application forms had a special star so that they could be easily spotted when brought into the library. Very few of them were brought in.

Several libraries reported on their book reviews in union papers and on their radio activities. Some doubt was expressed as to the effectiveness of such methods. There seemed to be some feeling that personal contacts are more valuable.

The South Chicago branch of the Chicago Public Library tried the experiment of taking books to industrial workers. At first they were taken in an automobile parked in the street on certain days of the week, and finally they were taken to a union office. A collection of books left at the local union office was not successful because the union officials were inclined to keep the books locked up for fear of losses.

Several librarians mentioned the help which labor unions gave them when they wanted increased budgets or money for special building programs. In Cleveland a labor representative appears at the budget hearing.

In his concluding statement Mr. Fish said that in his opinion librarians have simply not worked hard enough or consistently enough to induce union men and women to make use of their services.

* * * *

ANY NEWS ?

This is another reminder that we are always anxious to receive short news items or longer contributions from NEWSLETTER readers. Suggestions for future conference programs or NEWSLETTER articles are also welcome. Let us hear from you !

* * * *